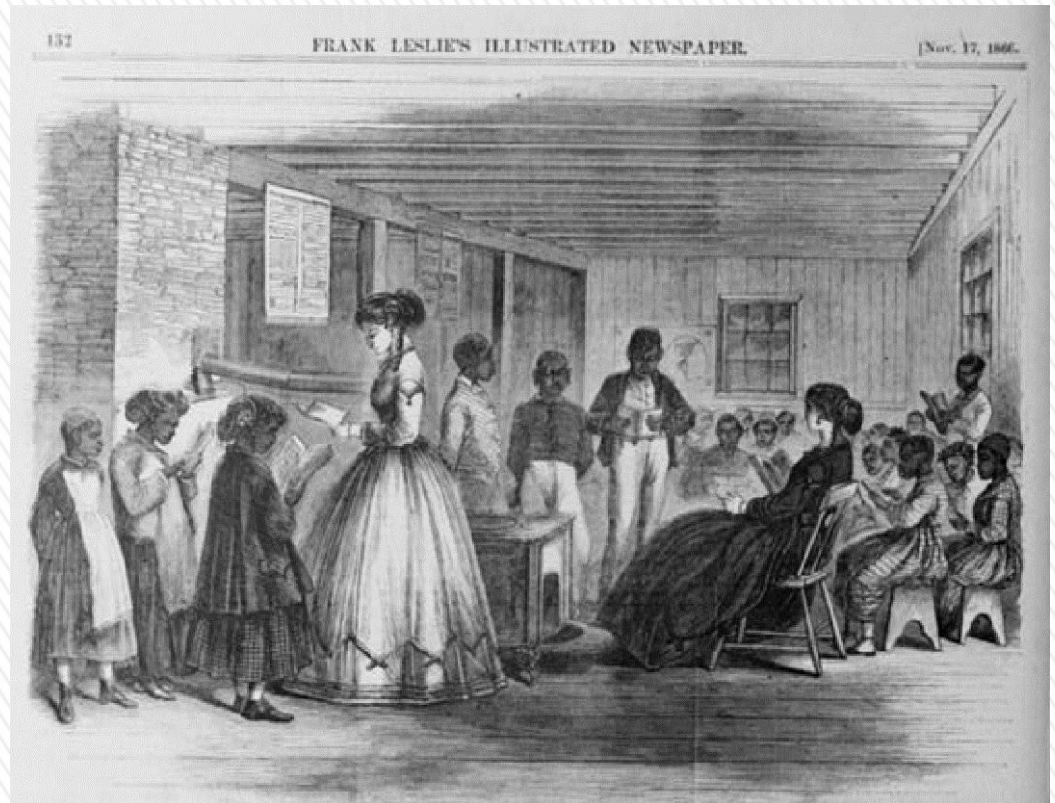


Differing Viewpoints on the Events of the  
Reconstruction, 1865 - 1877



# **Perspectives on Reconstruction Activity**

“As a former abolitionist, I am devoted to the cause of equal rights for freedmen. I came to the South to help African-American children – and adults, too – gain equal access to education and job skills. I believe every child has the right to learn how to read and write. Although many in the South call me a carpetbagger, insult me, and hate me for being here, I am devoted to equal rights for all.”



## Freedman's Bureau Teacher >

“I was an outspoken abolitionist and the editor of the North Star before the Civil War, and during the war I petitioned President Lincoln to let black soldiers fight for the Union cause. Now, as a leader of the Freedman’s Bureau, I want to see African-Americans assisted by the federal government – it will be no easy task to teach the formerly enslaved the skills they need to live independently.”



# Frederick Douglass





“After serving my country for four years, making tremendous sacrifices, and seeing my family suffer to resist the aggression of the Northern government, I am both angry and indignant at my plight. Now, supervised by soldiers in the Union army, I am forced to accept black slaves as my equals. I don’t know which group I hate more – these uppity blacks or the self-righteous Northern soldiers.”



# Ex-Confederate Soldier



“Although I was considered by some second-rate soldier, I served my nation honorably in battle and won my own freedom! I will not be treated as a second-class citizen! Slavery has ended, and now I deserve to inherit the blessings of liberty: citizenship, suffrage, and equal opportunity. I don’t expect for freedom to be easy, but I will not accept bondage of any form after what I have been through.”



# 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Colored Regiment





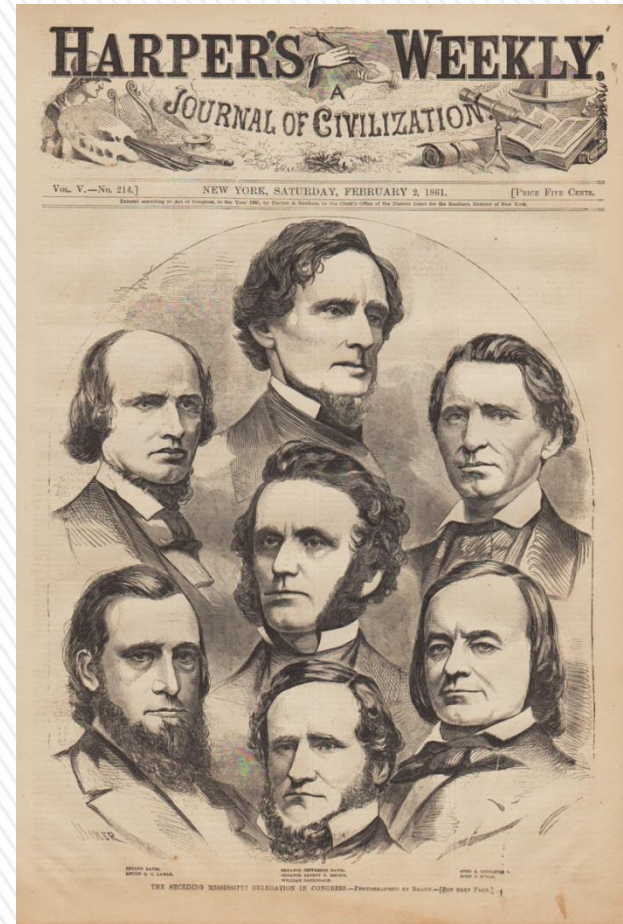
“At the beginning of this war, my only goal was to reunify the nation. During the course of war, however, dramatic changes often take place. As a war measure, I emancipated the slaves of the Confederacy. Now, ‘the new birth of freedom’ earned by the formerly enslaved will be a bitter point of division between North and South. Nevertheless, I seek a speedy reunion, without bitterness - ‘with malice towards none and charity for all.’”



# Abraham Lincoln



“As a leading member of the CSA government, I’ll likely never hold another elected office again. I have been held as a prisoner, and now granted amnesty by the Northern government. Still, I am much despised in the North. I remain convinced that our cause, a lost cause now, was just.”



# Jefferson Davis





“Today, I am the President of Washington College in Lexington, VA. At the end of the Civil War, I surrendered my Army of Northern Virginia to Ulysses S. Grant, and asked my people to lay down their arms. I hope for a speedy reunion with the North, and I am convinced that the South has suffered enough. I never thought slavery was morally right – and I know it can never exist in the South again. Yet, I can’t say I believe that blacks should be treated as equals, allowed full citizenship, or given the right to vote. And I know that many of my former soldiers will agree with me.”



# Robert E. Lee





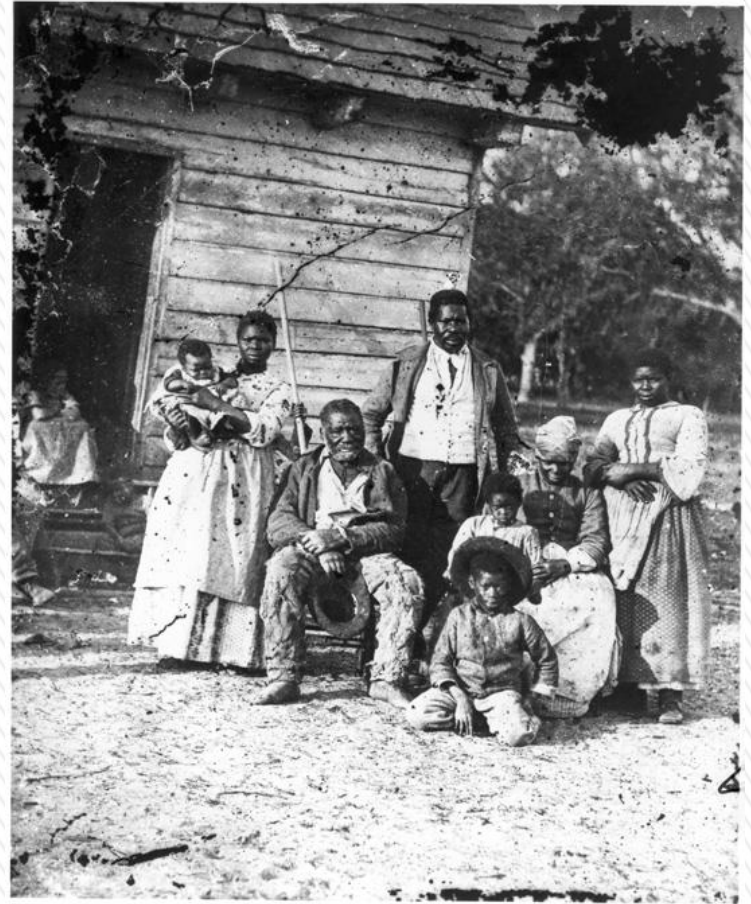
“I have lost everything. The abolitionists have forced their ways upon us, self-righteously and without regard for our property rights. Before the war over half of my wealth was held in slaves. I was able to grow enormous cotton crops and sell them on the open market at low prices because I had little or no cost in labor. Today, my fields are barren. Industry in the South has been wrecked. My slaves have left the plantation, and without them I cannot even manage to plant crops to feed the family. “



# Former Plantation Owner



“I always wanted to escape from my masters and the backbreaking labor of slavery. But freedom has been much more frightening and difficult than I expected. I own no property but the clothes on my back. I have no money, no savings, and no job. The whites in my community refuse to hire black workers – they refuse to pay a living wage to any former slaves. And worst of all, they have joined hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan, which terrorize me and my family when we insist on justice. Leaving the South, and the only life I’ve ever known, seems like the most hopeful possibility now.”



# Freedmen





“To be completely honest, I never cared very much about black slaves. It never seemed fair to me that a Northern farmer had to pay his farmhands while a Southerner just owned slaves, but it was only because the Southerners could get so much richer than we could.... Honestly, I wouldn't have signed up for a war to end slavery in 1861. I fought to preserve the Union. Once it became necessary to free the slaves to win the war that made me feel differently. After Antietam and the Proclamation, we fought the war to change the South, to end slavery, and to reunify the nation. Today, after all that was lost to preserve the Union, I am determined not to allow Southern states to rob freedmen of their rights. That's why I stayed on to occupy the state of Georgia – to protect the freedmen during Reconstruction.”



# Union Soldier

